Draft Message

H.E Ms. Mona Juul, President of the Economic and Social Council,

Permanent Representative of Norway to the UN

Forests and Biodiversity

2020 celebration of the International Day of Forests

21 March 2020

Forests and their sustainable management have long been a priority for the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Twenty years ago, the Council established the UN Forum on Forests as a global intergovernmental policy body to deliberate on all aspects of forests and trees. The Forum serves as the voice of the international forest policy community and has universal membership comprising of all UN member states.

Healthy and sustainably managed forests provide a crucial foundation for the sustainability of communities all around the world. They provide a myriad of ecosystem services, from clean water and renewable energy, to regulating the global climate and habitat for 80% of terrestrial biodiversity.

The theme of this year's International Day of Forests is Forests and Biodiversity, in recognition of 2020 being the "super year" for nature and biodiversity. The theme is also of particular relevance to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG 15 in particular, during the Decade of Action.

Although the statistics from recent reports are alarming, and forest biodiversity is being lost at accelerating rates, we must not give up hope. If we work together, we can turn the tide. Innovative solutions exist, it is up to us to be a voice of change for forests, and the biodiversity that lives within them. Not just because it is the right thing to do, but because our very future depends on it.

On this International Day of Forests, I hope that you will join me in reminding people around the world of the deep connection that exists between our natural environment and our wellbeing. Forests and their biodiversity benefit us all – it is time we took better care of these precious resources.

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